

## Victim Services Visits the Capital Guardian Youth ChalleNGe Academy

**C**apital Guardian Youth ChalleNGe Academy's mission (CGYCA) is to intervene in and reclaim the lives of 16- to 18-year-old high school dropouts, producing program graduates with the values, life skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed as productive citizens.

In keeping with their mission, CGYCA invited the Metropolitan Police's Victim Services Branch (VSB) to their campus to speak with their cadets about

the victim-related services and the importance of making a positive change. During this discussion, participants learned about the impact of violent crime on our communities and VSB's role in providing supportive services to families and the community.

This discussion caused the young people to reflect and opened the door to share the importance of making positive changes and conflict resolution. More importantly, it was



emphasized to the audience; that the only people that can stop them from achieving their goals are themselves. By entering the CGYCA program, they have taken the first step in a positive direc-

tion.

If you know of any young people who can benefit from our partners at CGYCA please visit <http://www.cgyca.org>.

—Mark Timberlake



Metropolitan Police Department  
Victim Services Branch/Family Liaison Specialists Unit  
101 M Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20024

# Empower!

GIVING VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES A VOICE



A Publication of the Metropolitan Police Department's Victim Services Branch

Summer 2021 | Volume 13, Issue 1

## Message from Tyria Fields



Tyria Fields

**T**his past 16 months has been particularly challenging for everyone. Some have dealt with personal loss and trauma. Many have discovered new paths in effort to recover and gain a sense of direction. And all are yearning for the "new normal." Whatever your par-

ticular circumstance, please know the Metropolitan Police Department is here to help. The Victim Services Branch is fully staffed, readily available and purposefully engaged with the community to provide meaningful trauma-informed victim services. Our mission to support survivors is the driving

force or our advocacy work. We stand with you. You are not alone.

## Upcoming Events and Activities

### All Summer

#### Beat the Streets

See link for specific dates and locations

This community outreach event serves as a traveling Community Festival and is a partnership between the Metropolitan Police Department, local social service agencies and community vendors. In a 3- to 5-hour block of time, community members (of all ages) enjoy musical performances from local bands and artists, as well as a street festival-like environment with local vendors and literature distributed by local social service agencies. This is an opportunity for members of the community to experience the lighter side of the police department while enjoying dancing, free food and fun.

Agency: DC Metropolitan Police Department & partner agencies

When/Where: All Summer/In-person. See link for specific dates & locations:  
<https://mpdc.dc.gov/page/beat-streets-2021>

#### The Gun Violence Memorial Project Collection Event

Through September 25, 2022

The memorial seeks to preserve individual memories and communicate the magnitude of gun violence in the built space, and hopes to foster a national healing process that begins with a recognition of the collective loss and its impact on society. The exhibition features four houses built of 700 glass bricks, each house representing the average number of lives taken due to gun violence each week in America. Families who have had loved one taken due to gun violence in any form have contributed remembrance objects at in-person collection events.

Agency: MASS Design Group, Hank Willis Thomas (artist), Purpose Over Pain & Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund  
[www.gunviolencememorialproject.org](http://www.gunviolencememorialproject.org)

Where: National Building Museum  
401 F St NW, Washington, DC

Contact: Ann Harper [awright@everytown.org](mailto:awright@everytown.org)

#### National Day of Remembrance for Murdered Victims

Saturday, September 25

This day is dedicated to honoring homicide victims and their surviving family members. It is also a day to bring public awareness to the impact of homicide and violent crimes in our communities. <https://mpdc.dc.gov/page/national-day-remembrance-murder-victims>

#### Ongoing

#### Prayer Helpline Support Team

Daily, 7 am–10 pm

DCAEHS, Inc., is very thankful for the opportunities to help our Communities! We are a Community Pastor, so if the community needs to have a Virtual Service for the loss of a loved one, we are available with no charge and we can assist them through the process.

Agency: DC Alliance Empowering Homicide Survivors, Inc.

Who: All Survivors from any Violence, including Coronavirus

Where: Teleconference Line - (240) 988-3483 (Must leave your Prayer Re-

quests; ALL calls will be returned)

Contact: Pastor P. Saunders, CEO; (240) 899-4669 or email Minister Mathis at [lorr5420@gmail.com](mailto:lorr5420@gmail.com)

#### PSA 702 Outreach Committee

Second Tuesday of Every Month, 2 pm

The Police Service Area 702 Outreach Committee meets the second Tuesday of every month at 2:00 pm by Zoom (with the exception of the month of August).

Agency: PSA 702 Outreach Committee

Contact:  
Brenda Richardson  
(202) 678.1978  
[brendarichardson724@gmail.com](mailto:brendarichardson724@gmail.com)

—Sharon Daugherty

## Wide Array of Resources Exist for Families Experiencing Strains of Homicide Loss

Families and survivors of homicide experience unimaginable grief, pain, and trauma. Although psychological trauma is a primary effect of losing a loved one, secondary victims also encounter financial cost due to crime-related expenses. Metropolitan Police Department's (MPD) Victim Services Branch (VSB) recognizes those burdens.

Our Victim Specialists act as a conduit to provide survivors with emotional support, information, and referrals to community agencies that provide therapeutic services and financial assistance. VSB has Victim Specialists located in the District to serve survivors one-on-one and act as liaison between the victim and detective. Specialists also engage community partners to foster relationships to meet the needs of survivors throughout the wards.

Locally in Ward 7, Wendt Center for Loss and Healing has been a focal community agency since 1975. According to Wendt Center's website, the agency has been nationally acclaimed for their knowledge and expertise in grief, loss, support, and healing. Wendt



Center incorporates inclusive treatment modalities for all ages and language types. Highlights of the agency's crime victim services include:

- » Homicide Outreach Project Empowering Survivors (HOPES) – the HOPE program offers emotional support to families, individuals and communities that experienced homicide-related crimes. Staff and Clinicians

are trained in the stages of grief and therapeutic practices

- » RECOVER – The Wendt Center partners with the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to provide support to families when identifying a deceased loved one. Moreover, the RECOVER program offers on-going support to families weeks after the homicide to check-in and offer resources.

- » Counseling Services – The Wendt Center provides unique therapy to address loss, livability, and redefine how to navigate life after a death.

For more information on Wendt Center, please visit: Wendt Center for Loss & Healing | Washington DC

National resources are available to secondary victims who need immediate counseling support. Most nationwide hotlines operate 24/7, 365 days a year. Survivors can call a toll-free number to access immediate services. However, as technology advances, organizations have developed opportunities for online/virtual service delivery. The National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children (POMC) now offers both phone and virtual hotlines at the request of clients. POMC's toll free number is: 1-888-818-7662. Please visit POMC's website for more details: <https://pomc.org>

Survivors often face financial impacts because of crime-related expenses. The District's Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVCP) provides monetary assistance and reimbursements to decrease survivor's financial hardship. Eligible compensable expenses include—but are not limited to—mental health, funeral cost, and crime scene clean-up. Please visit CVCP's website for additional information: Crime Victims Compensation Matters | District of Columbia Courts ([dccourts.gov](http://dccourts.gov))

*Submitted by Torie Stone, M.A.C.J.*

## National Night Out Against Crime! Held August 3rd



Each year, the Metropolitan Police Department actively joins thousands of DC residents, DC government & nonprofit agencies, and other community leaders to celebrate National Night Out. From community cookouts to open houses –

block parties, candlelight vigils and athletic events – DC geared up for its annual celebration of America's Night Out Against Crime. This was a great opportunity not just for MPD but all public safety agencies to interact and continue building relationships

with the community. Kids enjoyed meeting K9 units, sitting in the police vehicles, SWAT cars, fire trucks, etc. Together, we are making communities safer.

*—Sharon Daugherty*

## Keeping up With Cold Case Investigations – Next-of-Kin Meeting



In many homicide investigations, family members of homicide victims provide law enforcement with vital information that can lead to identifying and arresting the offender. The same is true in cold case homicides; law enforcement work to maintain continuous communication with survivors. This communication EMPOWERS families and gives them a voice to help keep the case of their loved one active.

On Saturday, June 26, 2021, families with open cases from 2011 participated in the

Metropolitan Police Department's 10-Year Review Cold Case Next of Kin Meeting. These meetings ensure that the communication between the Department and survivors continues throughout the investigation process. Detectives provided updates and allowed families to express any concerns regarding the investigation. Families often utilize these meetings to pick up reward flyers to distribute in the community at vigils and other memorial events.

Specialists from the Victim

Services Branch were on site to provide emotional support, referrals to community-based organizations, information about the Crime Victims Compensation Program and the criminal justice system, and discuss any unmet needs.

To obtain more information and resources related to cold case homicides, please contact MPD's Victim Services Branch-Family Liaisons Specialists Unit at (202) 645-6363 or visit <http://mpdc.dc.gov/page/unsolved-homicides>.

*—Megan Riley*

## DC Opens First-of-Its-Kind Gun Violence Prevention Emergency Operations Center

### Resources

For more information on Building Blocks DC visit <https://oca.dc.gov/page/building-blocks-dc>



In February 2021, Mayor Bowser held a press conference introducing the Gun Violence Prevention Emergency Operations Center (EOC), Building Blocks DC. To quote Mayor Bowser, "Today we are recognizing the scourge of gun violence for what it is: a public health crisis that requires a whole-government approach focused on people and places in our community." The EOC is located in Ward 8 in Historic Anacostia.

Employees from various District Government Agencies are detailed to work together to tackle an issue that is impacting many of the commu-

nities we live and work in. As a member of the EOC, I work on the Building Blocks Placed-Based Team; we work closely with community members in what we call "focus blocks." Our team identifies ways to prevent violent crime through environmental design. Specifically, the Place-Based Branch works directly in the neighborhoods to help problem solve any identified issues and EMPOWER communities to come together to build a stronger and safer DC for everyone who resides, works, and visits our city.

One of the common themes in our "focus blocks"

is that Law Enforcement alone cannot solve all of the issues. However, we know that Law Enforcement does play a critical role in this process. Residents have expressed the importance of improving community and police relationships. Through Building Blocks DC, I am learning that the answer to achieving all our goals is communication. It may not always be the best message: but if it is delivered clearly and respectfully in a way that we can all understand then collectively we can "Rebuild our Blocks."

*—Mark Timberlake*

## Victim Services Branch's 'Now You Know Roundtable' Honors Pride Month

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month is celebrated annually in June to honor the 1969 Stonewall riots and works to achieve equal justice and equal opportunity for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ+) community. It is meant to recognize the sweeping impact that LGBTQ+ in-

dividuals, advocates and allies have on history in the United States and around the globe. Pride month is also an opportunity to raise awareness of current issues facing the community. Our guests were:

- » **Stephania Mahdi**, Chair, DC Anti-Violence Project
- » **Tonya Turner**, Asst. Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General for the

District of Columbia

- » **Captain David Hong**, Executive Office of the Chief of Police, Special Liaison Branch, MPD

The discussion included how we honor Pride month in our DC community, types of crimes committed against the LGBTQ community and where to turn for help.

*—Sharon Daugherty*